

Minutes

Quarterly State QIC Meeting

May 12, 2010

Attending:

Rick Smith
Karen Payne
Dave Florence
Katy Larsen
Destry Maycock
Matthew Dinger
Daryl Melton

Carol Baumann
Julie Steele
Mike Hamblin
Geri Swift
Reba Nissen
Blake Jones
Aude Bermond-Hamlet

Reba Nissen welcomed all in attendance and the meeting began at 9:10 A.M.

She mentioned that part of the role of the QIC has been formalized in Utah State Code (location <http://le.utah.gov/~code/TITLE62A/htm/62A04a011700.htm>). That statute states that before amending performance standards, the division shall provide written notice of the proposed amendment to the QIC. The notice provided shall include the proposed amendment; a summary of the reason for the proposed amendment; and the proposed effective date of the amendment. The statute also provides definitions of terms and establishes timeframes for the response by the QIC and, upon approval, subsequent implementation of the amendment.

Reba introduced and welcomed Blake Jones, Program Coordinator of National Citizens Review Panels through the College of Social Work at the University of Kentucky.

Aude Bermond-Hamlet indicated that the DCFS Information, Evaluation and Research Team has access to a large amount of data that may be useful to QICs and invited QICs to call that office should there be any need for data, or questions about any of the Quarterly Reports (located at <http://www.dcfh.utah.gov/QuarterlyReport.htm>).

Aude mentioned that data for Quarterly Reports represents results from both Qualitative Case Reviews (QCR), conducted jointly by DCFS and the Office of Services Review, (QCR) and Case Process Reviews (CPR), which measure whether workers are performing the case process in accordance with Practice Guidelines, as well as are documenting their work properly in the state's data management program (SAFE).

Aude indicated that the QCR for this quarter has been completed in 4 of 5 regions. Eastern Region is the only one that has not completed that process for this quarter.

Aude addressed FY 2009 CRP results. 2010 data is not ready yet. She indicated that most data points measured met minimal standards. She expressed concerns over the inability to meet goals related to unscheduled home visits, shelter visits, documentation of parent

involvement in a child's case, and follow-up with medical treatment ordered as a result of an initial medical exam.

The state has seen declines in all QCR core indicators over the last year. DCFS administration and the Program and Practice Improvement Team are investigating possible reasons for this decline. While DCFS is meeting most national outcomes standards, Aude indicated that in Utah:

- The number of Foster Care cases open at any point in time is increasing. Correspondingly, the length of time children are remaining in foster care is increasing.
- The percentage of children that do not have a recurrence of a supported allegation of maltreatment (as measured by the absence of a supported allegation 6 months after the initial supported allegation), while improving, is still below the goal of 94.6%. She indicated the inability to meet this goal might be due in part to the fact that, in Utah, a supported allegation of child abuse or neglect can include a child's witnessing of an incidence of domestic violence.
- The percentage of children reentering custody, within 12 months of the date of discharge, is higher than the national goal.
- Utah's results in achieving permanency by having children placed in 2 or fewer placements in the first twelve months of custody still do not meet the national goal.

Mentioning successes, Aude stated that Utah is still at or near the top in the nation at finalizing adoptions from foster care in the least amount of time. While the national goal is 29.5 months, Utah is completing these adoptions in an average of 16.2 months.

She indicated that the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), the federal review of Utah's ability to meet its outcome measures, is scheduled June 21, 2010 through June 25, 2010. Federal/State joint review teams will review cases from three sites, Salt Lake, Washington, and Weber counties. An Exit Conference, where federal reviewers will present the results of the review, will be held on June 25th in room 1020 C. She invited all QIC members to that Exit Conference and will notify them of the exact time as soon as it is set.

As a result of the CFSR, the division will most likely have to complete a Program Improvement Plan (PIP), which will outline measures DCFS will take to meet priorities identified by the review team. QICs are encouraged to be a part of the PIP development process and are encouraged to pursue areas identified as needing attention as they prioritize future QIC related activities.

In the second half of the meeting, Reba once again introduced Blake Jones. Blake led a discussion that identified "why citizen involvement is needed" in the child welfare system. Resulting comments indicated that citizens:

- Provide "productive" community critics of the child welfare system

- May have a different perspective of the child welfare system than that of child welfare workers and management
- Increase the array of resources available to the child welfare system
- Ensure that a “community-based system,” rather than an agency-based system exists
- Help identify important community standards and needs
- Can provide an external review of services and provide feedback to the system
- Increase visibility of the child welfare system and assure accountability
- Can be advocates for the agency
- Can educate their communities about the strengths and weaknesses of the agency and the states child welfare system.

Blake reviewed requirements relating to Citizen Review Panels (CRP) outlined in the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). Each state, with a couple of exceptions, is required to have at least three CRPs. Those panels are responsible for reviewing compliance with the state’s CAPTA plan, reviewing child fatalities or near fatalities, as well as reviewing other child welfare issues the panel deems necessary.

Panels should be representative of the broad-based community, meet quarterly, examine agency policies and procedures, maintain confidentiality, and publish an annual report of their activities. They may also review cases to obtain information they need to meet these requirements.

Examples of activities panels may choose to complete are:

- Examine the way the agency conducts intake and screening
- Look at the ways the agency conducts investigations and completes assessments
- Review the process that results in case determinations
- Become involved in service planning, implementation, and evaluation
- Identify means to ensure coordination of services
- Examine staff qualifications, training, and workload.

Blake explained that in Kentucky they have two regional panels and one statewide panel. Their CAPTA funds are funneled through their state agency. Some of those funds are used to support CRPs. They meet monthly and have “working teams” that undertake specific projects. They have worked on a variety of issues including those related to communication between CPS and schools, children aging out of foster care, and training of CPS workers.

He has a social work practicum student that assists him in his CRP activities and suggested that all panels look at their social work programs as a possible resource.

Blake mentioned he has seen a number of successful activities come out of other state CRPs including the development of “mini-CFSR” teams, the development of a flow-chart that shows the result current CRP activities and tracks the success of previous activities, the development of a strategy to contact and communicate with state legislators, and a measure that lead to the development of on-line training related to mandated reports.

Some of the common themes he's seen in states he's visited are that CRPs are usually coordinated or supported by someone inside the child welfare agency, many struggle in achieving a diverse membership that involves "non-professionals", that QICS often have a problem defining their mission, that there is a question as to whether CRPs should be "watchdogs" over an agency or an advocate of the agency, that retention of members is difficult, that there is high turnover of staff in the state agency who are responsible for supporting CPRs, and that CPRs have a difficult time connecting themselves to the CFSR process.

He also mentioned that members often feel overwhelmed by the complexities of the child welfare system, that they often have difficulty choosing issues or activities that add substance and value, and may get lost in the number of groups addressing child welfare issues.

One obstacle members may face is the lack of follow-through on goals, or the presence of conflicting goals, which may be in part due to the presence of an ineffective chairperson. Other obstacles met by members may include distrust from workers, the need to deal with an overwhelming number of acronyms and the presence of members that are antagonistic toward the panel, agency, or child welfare system in general. Finally, members may find it difficult to be informed by the agency, in a timely manner, of critical issues or initiatives.

Ways state child welfare agencies can foster collaboration with their CRPs include assuring that staff liaisons between the panel and agency do not constantly rotate out, helping panels develop their strategic plan, providing panels with appropriate feedback, and responding in a timely manner to panel recommendations and the CRP annual report.

He mentioned that successful panels have a clear focus and strategic plan, work on specific manageable issues, have a good relationship with the state child welfare agency, receive logistical and other support from the state agency, engage in constructive dialogue, connect with other child welfare agencies and advocates in their area, and have productive meetings. Effective panels attack a problem, not other members, keep an eye on group health, stay focused on the goal to develop a safer community, and spend a lot of time tending to relationships.

Finally, Blake introduced the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) tool, which members used evaluate Utah's CRP environment. His wrap-up indicated:

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| <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panels have been able to retain more long-term members, core members, and stable members • Panels receive good support from DCFS administration and staff • Members have a better understanding of the child welfare structure as well as its goals and objectives. • Leadership has good buy-in to goals • Immersion experiences are conducted in regions • Members show good diversity in terms of agencies they represent • Good state QIC and local QIC relationship • Good enthusiasm on most panels • Panels are making and achieving more assignments | <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funding (especially for food) • Communities often do not understand the child welfare system • Panels have a hard time recruiting new members • Members may have a lack of understanding of the role of the QIC • Some members have technological problems (no e-mail..etc). • Lack of clarity of roles • One panel has no co-chair • Not racially diverse |
| <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in the CFSR • Being free of the David C. lawsuit • Formation of relationships with the new DCFS Director and Western Region Director (not that there was a problem with the old directors) • There are no lack of problems or issues to address | <p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Crisis • Lack of David C. lawsuit • Lack of Legislators that value child welfare services • No food for meetings • Multiple committees addressing multiple issues in communities diluting the pool of available membership • Overload of caseworkers |

Reba thanked Blake and all panel members for their attendance.

Next meeting Wednesday, August 4th, 2010, at 10:00 a.m.